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829 can ease somewhat the tensions created by this process of fulfillment. But beneath the activity and bustle of daily life is the constant awareness of an irrevocable choice to be made. One must either die (physically or spiritually), or else one must be reborn according to a prescribed method, namely, the taking of Murti-Bing pills. People in the West are often inclined to consider the lot of converted countries in terms of might and coercion. That is wrong. There is an internal longing for harmony and happiness that lies deeper than ordinary fear or the desire to escape misery or physical destruction. The fate of completely consistent, non-dialectical people like Witkiewicz is a warning for many an intellectual. All about him, in the city streets, he sees the frightening shadows of internal exiles, irreconcilable, non-participating, eroded by hatred.

829 In order to understand the situation of a writer in a
● 156 people's democracy, one must seek the reasons for his activity and ask how he maintains his equilibrium. Whatever one may say, the New Faith affords great possibilities for an active and positive life. And Murti-Bing is more tempting to an intellectual than to a peasant or laborer. For the intellectual, the New Faith is a candle that he circles like a moth. In the end, he throws himself into the flame for the glory of mankind. We must not treat this desire for self-immolation lightly. Blood flowed freely in Europe during the religious wars, and he who joins the New Faith today is paying off a debt to that European tradition. We are concerned here with questions more significant than mere force.

I shall try to grasp those profound human longings and to speak about them as if one really could analyze what is the warm blood and the flesh, itself, of man. If I should try to describe the reasons why a man becomes a revolu-

1/A [see category 116, p. 4 -- Analyst]

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tionary I would be neither eloquent nor restrained enough. 829
I admit that I have too much admiration for those who 156
fight evil, whether their choice of ends and means be right or wrong. I draw the line, however, at those intellectuals who *adapt* themselves, although the fact that they are adapted and not genuine revolutionaries in no way diminishes their newly acquired zeal and enthusiasm.

There are, I believe, a few key concepts which may lead us to understand why they accept Murti-Bing.

THE VOID

The society portrayed by Witkiewicz is distinguished by the fact that in it religion has ceased to exist as a force. And it is true that religion long ago lost its hold on men's minds not only in the people's democracies, but elsewhere as well. As long as a society's best minds were occupied by theological questions, it was possible to speak of a given religion as the way of thinking of the whole social organism. All the matters which most actively concerned the people were referred to it and discussed in its terms. But that belongs to a dying era. We have come by easy stages to a lack of a common system of thought that could unite the peasant cutting his hay, the student poring over formal logic, and the mechanic working in an automobile factory. Out of this lack arises the painful sense of detachment or abstraction that oppresses the "creators of culture." Religion has been replaced by philosophy which, however, has strayed into spheres increasingly less accessible to the layman. The discussions of Husserl by Witkiewicz's heroes can scarcely interest a reader of even better-than-average education; whereas the peasants remained bound to the Church, be it only emotionally and traditionally. Music, painting, and poetry became some-

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thing completely foreign to the great majority of people. A theory developed that art should become a substitute for religion: "metaphysical feelings" were to be expressed in the "compression of pure form"; and so form soon came to dominate content.

To belong to the masses is the great longing of the "alienated" intellectual. It is such a powerful longing that, in trying to appease it, a great many of them who once looked to Germany or Italy for inspiration have now become converted to the New Faith. Actually, the rightist totalitarian program was exceptionally poor. The only gratification it offered came from collective *warmth:* crowds, red faces, mouths open in a shout, marches, arms brandishing sticks; but little rational satisfaction. Neither racist doctrines, nor hatred of foreigners, nor the glorification of one's own national traditions could efface the feeling that the entire program was improvised to deal with problems of the moment. But Murti-Bing is different. It lays scientific foundations. At the same time, it scraps all vestiges of the past. Post-Kantian philosophy, fallen into disrepute because of its remoteness from the life of men; art designed for those who, having no religion, dare not admit that to seek the "absolute" through a juxtaposition of colors and sounds is cowardly and inconclusive thinking; and the semi-magic, semi-religious mentality of the peasants—these are replaced by a *single* system, a single language of ideas. The truck driver and elevator operator employed by a publishing firm now read the same Marxist classics as its director or staff writers. A day laborer and a historian can reach an understanding on this basis of common reading. Obviously, the difference that may exist between them in mental level is no smaller than that which separated a theologian from a village blacksmith in the middle ages.

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But the fundamental principles are universal; the great spiritual schism has been obliterated. Dialectical materialism has united everyone, and philosophy (i.e., dialectics) once more determines the patterns of life. It is beginning to be regarded with a respect one reserves only for a force on which important things depend: bread and milk for one's children, one's own happiness and safety. The intellectual has once more become *useful*. He who may once have done his thinking and writing in his free moments away from a paying job in a bank or post office, has now found his rightful place on earth. He has been restored to society, whereas the businessmen, aristocrats, and tradespeople who once considered him a harmless blunderer have now been dispossessed. They are indeed delighted to find work as cloakroom attendants and to hold the coat of a former employee of whom they said, in pre-war days, "It seems he writes." We must not oversimplify, however, the gratifications of personal ambition; they are merely the outward and visible signs of social usefulness, symbols of a recognition that strengthens the intellectual's feeling of *belonging*.

THE ABSURD

Even though one seldom speaks about metaphysical motives that can lead to a complete change of people's political opinions, such motives do exist and can be observed in some of the most sensitive and intelligent men. Let us imagine a spring day in a city situated in some country similar to that described in Witkiewicz's novel. One of his heroes is taking a walk. He is tormented by what we may call the *suction* of the absurd. What is the significance of the lives of the people he passes, of the senseless bustle, the laughter, the pursuit of money, the stupid

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the weapons of the dialectician and those of his adversary. A match between the two is like a duel between a foot soldier and a tank. Not that every dialectician is so very intelligent or so very well educated, but all his statements are enriched by the cumulated thought of the masters and their commentators. If every sentence he speaks is compact and effective, that is not due to his own merits, but to those of the classics he has studied. His listeners are defenseless. They could, it is true, resort to arguments derived from their observations of life, but such arguments are just as badly countenanced as any questioning of fundamental methodology. The dialectician rubs up against his public at innumerable meetings of professional organizations and youth groups in clubs, factories, office buildings, and village huts throughout the entire converted area of Europe. And there is no doubt that he emerges the victor in these encounters.

It is no wonder that a writer or painter doubts the wisdom of resistance. If he were sure that art opposed to the official line could have a lasting value, he probably would not hesitate. He would earn his living through some more menial job within his profession, write or paint in his spare time, and never worry about publishing or exhibiting his work. He believes, however, that in most cases such work would be artistically poor, and he is not far wrong. As we have already said, the objective conditions he once knew have disappeared. The objective conditions necessary to the realization of a work of art are, as we know, a highly complex phenomenon, involving one's public, the possibility of contact with it, the general atmosphere, and above all freedom from involuntary subjective control. "I can't write as I would like to," a young Polish poet admitted to me. "My own stream of thought has so many tributaries, that I barely succeed in damming

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off one, when a second, third, or fourth overflows. I get halfway through a phrase, and already I submit it to Marxist criticism. I imagine what X or Y will say about it, and I change the ending."

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is this subjective impotence that convinces the intellectual that the one Method is right. Everything proves it is right. Dialectics: I predict the house will burn; then I pour gasoline over the stove. The house burns; my prediction is fulfilled. Dialectics! I predict that a work of art incompatible with socialist realism will be worthless. Then I place the artist in conditions in which such a work *is* worthless. My prediction is fulfilled.

Let us take poetry as an example. Obviously, there is poetry of political significance. Lyric poetry is permitted to exist on certain conditions. It must be: 1) serene; 2) free of any elements of thought that might trespass against the universally accepted principles (in practice, this comes down to descriptions of nature and of one's feelings for friends and family); 3) understandable. Since a poet who is not allowed to *think* in his verse automatically tends to perfect his form, he is accused of formalism.

It is not only the literature and painting of the people's democracies that prove to the intellectual that *things cannot be different.* He is strengthened in this belief by the news that seeps through from the West. The Western world is the world of Witkiewicz's novel. The number of its aesthetic and philosophical aberrations is myriad. Disciples imitate disciples; the past imitates the past. This world lives as if there had never been a Second World War. Intellectual clans in Eastern Europe know this life, but know it as a stage of the past that isn't worth looking back on. Even if the new problems are so oppressive that they can break a great many people, at least they are con-

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000 The assertion that historical guilt is individual guilt *per se* is nothing more than the subterfuge of a guilty and lying conscience. This does not mean that one can put off the problem of historical guilt with easy generalizations. Stupidity, i.e. inability to understand the mechanism of events, can cause tremendous suffering. In this sense, the Polish commanders who gave the order to start the Warsaw uprising in 1944 are guilty of stupidity, and their guilt has an individual character. Another individual guilt, however, weighs upon the command of the Red Army which refused to aid the insurgents—not out of stupidity, but on the contrary out of a full understanding of "historical processes," i.e. a correct evaluation of power.

One more example of guilt through stupidity is the attitude of various societies toward thinkers, writers, or artists whose vision reached into the future and whose works were largely incomprehensible to their contemporaries. The critic who denied the value of these works might have acted in good faith, but by his stupidity he condemned men of incomparably greater worth than himself to poverty, even persecution. The specific trick of the Christian-Stalinists is to lump these two concepts of guilt, individual and historical, together, while it is only in a few instances that these concepts coincide.

• 156 659 Catholics who accept the Party line gradually lose everything except the phraseology of their Christian metaphysics. The true content of their faith becomes the Method by a psychological process well-known to Christians in the people's democracies. The existence of a large number of loyal half-Christians in the subjugated part of Europe could have a tremendous effect on the Imperium's political plans. Toleration and even support of these "Christian-patriots," as they are called, enables the Center to avoid a dangerous conflict. The transition from Chris-

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tianity to a cult of History takes place imperceptibly. Without doubt, the greatest success of the Imperium would come if it could install a Party-line pope in the Vatican. A mass in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, performed by such a pope, with the assistance of dignitaries from those subjugated countries which are predominately Catholic, would be one of the most important steps toward the consolidation of the world empire.

Christians who serve the Eastern Imperium ingeniously resolve the problem posed by Jesus' words "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Until now the contrast between the ordinary man and Caesar has never been effaced. Christianity guaranteed this division by teaching that every man had his own history, distinct from the history of the social group or the nation to which he belonged. If, as is taught today from the Elbe to Vladivostok, the history of every man is nothing more than the reflection of the history of his class, and if his class is personified in Caesar, then it is clear that the man who rebels against Caesar rebels against himself. Christians who agree to this thesis prove they no longer believe in God's judgment of each man's acts. Fear that History will damn them eternally motivates their submission.

The Party knows that the conflict between true Christianity and the Revolution is fundamental. The Revolution aims at the highest goal the human species has ever set for itself on earth, the end of "man's exploitation of man." To do this, it must replace man's desire for profit with a feeling of collective responsibility as a motive for action. This is a distant and honorable goal. Probably it will not be reached quickly; and probably, too, for a long period it will be necessary to maintain a constant terror in order to instill that feeling of responsibility by force.

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● 156 But Christianity contains a dual set of values; it recognizes man to be a "child of God" and also a member of society. As a member of society, he must submit to the established order so long as that order does not hinder him in his prime task of saving his soul. Only by effacing this dualism, i.e. raising man as a purely social creature, can the Party release the forces of hatred in him that are necessary to the realization of the new world.

156 639 The masses in highly industrialized countries like England, the United States, or France are largely de-Christianized. Technology, and the way of life it produces, undermines Christianity far more effectively than do violent measures. The erosion of religious beliefs is also taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. There, the core of the problem is to avoid galvanizing the forces of Christianity by some careless misstep. It would be an act of unforgivable carelessness, for example, to close the churches suddenly and prohibit all religious practice. Instead, one should try to split the Church in two. Part of the clergy must be compromised as reactionaries and "foreign agents"—a rather easy task, given the utterly conservative mentality of many priests. The other part must be bound to the state as closely as the Orthodox Church is in Russia, so that it becomes a tool of the government. A completely submissive Church—one that may on occasion collaborate with the security police—loses authority in the eyes of the pious. Such a Church can be preserved for decades, until the moment when it dies a natural death due to a lack of adherents.

156 So there are measures that can be taken even against the Church, this last stronghold of opposition. Nevertheless, the masses in the people's democracies behave like a man who wants to cry out in his sleep and cannot find his voice. They not only dare not speak, they do not know

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what to say. Logically, everything is as it should be. From the philosophical premises to the collectivization of the farms, everything makes up a single closed whole, a solid and imposing pyramid. The lone individual inevitably asks himself if his antagonism is not wrong; all he can oppose to the entire propaganda apparatus are simply his irrational desires. Should he not, in fact, be ashamed of them?

The Party is vigilantly on guard lest these longings be transmuted into new and vital intellectual formulas adapted to new conditions and therefore capable of winning over the masses. Neither the reaction nor the Church are as great a menace as is *heresy*. If men familiar with dialectics and able to present dialectical materialism in a new light appear, they must be rendered harmless at once. A professor of philosophy who clings to obsolete "idealistic" concepts is not particularly dangerous. He loses his lectureship, but he is allowed to earn a living by editing texts, etc. Whereas a professor who, using the names of Marx and Engels, permits himself departures from orthodoxy sows seeds from which alarming crops may grow.

Only the bourgeois persists in thinking that nothing results from these nuances of thought. The Party knows that much can come of them: there was a time when the Revolution was merely a nuance in the thinking of a little group of theoreticians led by Lenin, quarreling around a café table in Switzerland. The most neuralgic points of the doctrine are philosophy, literature, the history of art, and literary criticism; those are the points where man in his unfortunate complexity enters the equation. The difference of a tiny fraction in the premises yields dizzying differences after the calculation is completed. A deviation from the line in the evaluation of some work of art may

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failed. In fact, History itself exploded one after another the formulas that have been considered binding. This time, however, the rulers have mastered dialectics so, they assert, they will know how to modify the doctrine as new necessities arise. The judgments of an individual man can always be wrong; the only solution is to submit unreservedly to an authority that claims to be unerring.

But what can the doctrine do about the unformulated longings of men? Why does a good Communist, without any apparent reason, suddenly put a pistol to his head? Why does he escape abroad? Isn't this one of those chasms over which the scientifically constructed bridges pass? People who flee from the people's democracies usually give as their chief motive the fact that life in these countries is psychically unbearable. They stammer out their efforts to explain: "The dreadful sadness of life over there"; "I felt I was turning into a machine." It is impossible to communicate to people who have not experienced it the undefinable menace of total rationalism.

To forestall doubt, the Party fights any tendency to delve into the depths of a human being, especially in literature and art. Whoever reflects on "man" in general, on his inner needs and longings, is accused of bourgeois sentimentality. Nothing must ever go beyond the description of man's behavior as a member of a social group. This is necessary because the Party, treating man exclusively as the by-product of social forces, believes that he becomes the type of being he pictures himself to be. He is a social monkey. *What is not expressed does not exist.* Therefore if one forbids men to explore the depths of human nature, one destroys in them the urge to make such explorations; and the depths in themselves slowly become unreal.

I should like to clear up in advance a possible misunderstanding. Personally, I am not in favor of art that is too

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beds. All these lands will never again become what they once were—regions of constant struggle and short-lived serenity, of poverty and its exploitation, of poetry, fervor, and sadness. Those of us who have, for example, seen peasant women trudging for many miles through the omnipresent dust to kneel for an hour at the shrines of Silesia will never forget either the fact or its meaning.

There is not a foot of the old soil of Central Europe which has not been consecrated by endurance for the sake of the things of the spirit and the mind. Indeed, I have sometimes wondered, reading the Polish and Silesian poets and novelists, why the longing to hold out should have persisted during many difficult centuries—why, for instance, Polish forests in thrall to the Czars should have hidden priest and ritual with such fidelity. Perhaps the explanation, in so far as it is of this world, can be found in the deep human urge for the preservation of identity. Custom and language were vital symbols of the self, and without them men felt they could not live. But stronger than all else was the deep, primitive, mystical desire for identification with Eternal Righteousness, manifest to the believer in the life of the Redeemer. To give up the faith was to surrender not merely one's self but the world as well.

To be sure these men and women were very human, often poverty-stricken and untutored, sometimes intolerant and oppressive. The effort to conserve themselves and their identity spilled over into moments of vengeful outrage inflicted upon others because they were different. Thus anti-Semitism has a long history in Eastern Europe studded with bloody pogroms. Although curbed in Austro-Hungarian regions it was latent there, too, as the shameful events of 1938 proved, but manifest elsewhere continuously with varying intensity. Or who can forget the repression of the Ukrainians in Poland under the Pilsudski government, the conflict between Czechs and Slovaks,